

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

SS-20 USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 NIC-01 DRC-01 TRSE-00

SAJ-01 SCEM-02 SCI-06 EB-11 COME-00 INT-08 AF-10 /186 W

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FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7086

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION USNATO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR MARR US SP NATO

SUBJECT: SPANISH OFFICIAL AND PRESS REACTION TO BASES CONTROVERSY

1. ALTHOUGH MFA OFFICIALS PRIVATELY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THEY WERE UNDER HEAVY PRESSURE FROM PRESS TO COMMENT, GOS DECIDED NOT TO ISSUE FORMAL STATEMENT CONCERNING NEWS REPORT OCTOBER 26 THAT US BASES THROUGHOUT THE WORLD IN STATE OF FULL ALERT. MFA OFFICIALS INITIALLY APPROACHED AN EMBASSY OFFICER ABOUT POSSIBLE JOINT STATEMENT, THEN SUBSEQUENTLY DROPPED THE IDEA. ACCORDING TO US CORRESPONDENT HERE, GOS EVEN MADE LAST MINUTE EFFORT TO HAVE AFTERNOON DAILY INFORMACIONES SUPPRESS OR PLAY DOWN REPORT OF ALERT OCTOBER 26, MFA EFFORTS, HOWEVER, CAME TOO LATE AND INFORMACIONES FRONT-
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PAGED STORY UNDER BANNER HEADLINE "GENERAL ALERT IN US BASES".

2. AT CUSTOMARY FRIDAY AFTERNOON BRIEFING FOLLOWING COUNCIL OF MINISTERS MEETING, MINISTER OF INFORMATION FERNANDO LINAN, IN RESPONSE TO PRESS INQUIRIES, IS REPORTED TO HAVE SAID THAT WORLDWIDE US ALERT HAD NOT AFFECTED SPANISH BASES. LINAN EXPLAINED THAT, ACCORDING TO EXISTING US-SPANISH AGREEMENTS, IN ORDER TO USE BASES THERE MUST BE "MUTUAL AGREEMENT WITH RESPECT TO THE EXISTING SITUATION" IN CASE OF EXTERNAL THREAT OR EXTERNAL ATTACK AGAINST SECURITY OF WEST. LOCAL PRESS APPARENTLY UNDER INJUNCTION TO TREAT ALERT ISSUE WITH RESTRAINT. LINAN STATEMENT WAS BRIEFLY MENTIONED IN SEVERAL MAJOR DAILIES AND IGNORED BY OTHERS.

3. PRESUMED UNILATERAL DECLARATION OF ALERT BY US AT SPANISH BASES HAS SINCE BEEN SUBJECT OF SOME RESTRAINED EDITORIAL COMMENT. TAKING NOTE OF CONCERN OF SOME NATO COUNTRIES, LUIS APOSTUA, COLUMNIST FOR CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC DAILY, YA, STATED THAT ALERT ON SPANISH BASES "NOT POSSIBLE" BECAUSE THERE HAD BEEN NO PRIOR AGREEMENT BY GOS AS MFA HAD STATED FROM BEGINNING. APOSTUA CONTINUED THAT PROBLEM OF US BASES, POLITICAL CONTEXT OF WHICH QUITE DIFFERENT FROM THAT OF THE 1950'S, "GOES DEEPER THAN THIS SIMPLE INCIDENT OF AN ALARM IN THE FACE OF AN ENEMY, USSR, THAT HAS NOT MOVED A SINGLE SOLDIER." COMPARING THIS SITUATION WITH CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS, HE CONCLUDED, WOULD BE MERELY A WHIM TO FRIGHTEN READERS.

4. WRITING IN SAME VEIN IN OCTOBER 28 ISSUE OF YA, APOSTUA AGAIN TOOK NOTE OF BRITISH COMPLAINTS ABOUT US ALERT. HE NOTED THAT SPAIN MORE FORTUNATE THAN UK BECAUSE, ACCORDING TO "HIGH LEVEL AUTHORITIES," SPANISH BASES AT ROTA AND TORREJON WERE NOT PUT ON ALERT BECAUSE THE REQUIRED CONSULTATIONS HAD NOT TAKEN PLACE, NOR DID THE CONDITIONS ENVISAGED IN ARTICLE 34 OF AFC EXIST. NEVERTHELESS, APOSTUA CONTINUED, FUTURE OF AGREEMENTS CLOUDY. BASIC REASON FOR THEIR EXISTENCE, COLD WAR, HAS GIVEN WAY TO "STRANGE BUT EFFICIENT COOPERATION BETWEEN US AND USSR THAT MAKES TWO GIANTS ARBITERS OF THE MOST DIVERSE LOCAL CONFLICTS." APOSTUA ALSO CLAIMED THAT BECAUSE OF "CURRENT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CONSTITUTIONAL CRISIS IN US," CONGRESS WILL CURTAIL FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT OF THE PRESIDENT AND REQUIRE RATIFICATION OF FUTURE BASE AGREEMENTS. NEGOTIATIONS, THEREFORE, WOULD BE WITH CAPITOL HILL AS WELL AS WHITE HOUSE."

5. SEMANA POLITICA COLUMN OF YA OF SAME DAY NOTED THAT, WITH PROSPECTIVE FUEL PRICE INCREASES, SPANISH CONSUMER WILL BEGIN PAYING FOR CONSEQUENCES OF A CONFLICT IN WHICH

HE WANTED NO PART. SPANISH POSITION DIFFICULT BECAUSE IN SPITE OF SPAIN'S TRADITIONAL SUPPORT FOR ARAB CAUSE, IT HAS AGREEMENTS WITH THE "FRIENDS OF ITS ENEMIES" THAT CAN LEAD TO INVOLVEMENT. COLUMNIST ADDS THAT, IN CASE OF FRIDAY'S WORLDWIDE ALERT, IT IS QUITE CLEAR US DID NOT CONSULT ITS ALLIES TO MOVE ITS TROOPS. HE SAW THIS AS ONE MORE EXAMPLE OF WESTERN EUROPE SERVITUDE TOWARD US.

6. WRITING IN NATIONAL MOVEMENT DAILY ARRIBA, COLUMNIST FERNANDO ONEGA NOTES THAT AC PROVIDES THAT SPANISH BASES CAN BE USED ONLY IN DEFENSE OF WEST. BUT HE SAW LACK OF COMMON UNDERSTANDING OF KEY CONCEPT, "DEFENSE OF WEST", BETWEEN US AND EUROPE. HE CONCLUDED THAT REPEATED NOTES OF MFA REGARDING THE NON-USE OF THE BASES IN MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT WERE NECESSARY FOR SERENITY OF SPANISH PEOPLE. RECALLING THAT BASES ARE SPANISH PROPERTY, BUT SOME OF THEIR PERSONNEL ARE UNDER US CONTROL, ONEGA STATES SPAIN HAS NOTHING BUT GUARANTEE THAT DECISIONS WILL BE ADOPTED JOINTLY BY THE TWO GOVERNMENTS.

7. WHILE PRESS IN GENERAL HAS DEALT IN RESTRAINED WAY WITH US-SPANISH PROBLEMS STEMMINGFROM USE OF BASES AND ALERT, INFORMACIONES AND, TO SOME EXTENT, YA, HAVE GIVEN INTENSIVE, STEADY COVERAGE TO FRICTION BETWEEN US AND WESTERN EUROPEAN NATO PARTNERS, PARTICULARLY UK AND FRG, OVER USE OF BASES AND US ALERT. BOTH OF THESE NEWSPAPERS ARE CONSIDERED CRITICS OF THE GOVERNMENT, WITHIN THELATITUDE PERMITTED BY PRESS CONTROL. RIVERO

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